

# Saturday



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## SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF CANTON PART II.



VIEW IN THE SUBURBS OF CANTON.

### STREETS.

"There is nothing," says Mr. Abell, "in the locality of the place, the arrangement of its streets, or the style of its buildings, to call forth the admiration of the visitor. The scene, it is true, affords abundant interest to the stranger; but it is the exclusive interest of novelty, and soon leaves the mind without an agreeable recollection. The houses are generally low, narrow, and exceedingly compact. Some of the factories or honges, especially those occupied by the tea-merchants, are immensely spacious, and contain a vast number of compartments; but you are obliged to enter them before you can determine their locality, as there is nothing to designate them either in front or length."

The streets of Canton are very numerous, though a great many of them are more deserving of the appellation of alleys. "We have before us," says the *Chinese Repository*, "a catalogue containing the names of more than six hundred, among which we find the Dragon Street, the Flying-dragon Street, the Martial-dragon Street, the Flower Street, the Golden Street, the Golden-flower Street; and among many more of a similar kind, we meet with a few which we should not wish to translate." There are several long streets, but most of them are short and crooked; they vary in width from two to sixteen feet wide, and they are everywhere flagged with large stones, chiefly granite. The average width of the streets of the whole city is estimated at eight feet. Our actual knowledge of them is, of course, limited to those of the suburbs; but it seems pretty certain that the streets of the city are exactly similar. Some of the narrowest streets in the suburbs are among the most frequented; there are several even in the business

districts, in which a man may stand, and with his arms extended, touch the houses on either side. "Economy of room to the exclusion of comfort, convenience, or cleanliness, appears like the sole object in the lanes where the women and children are kennelled. This is the only specimen of domestic life within the allowed range of the foreigner, and it is said that the families of persons of considerable wealth are obliged to exist under these circumstances. It requires a degree of courage and perseverance to thread the mazes of some of these alleys, and emerge into air and space. Elbows and angles of almost every name, formed by the blind corners of buildings, oppose the progress of the wanderer, and if he dare proceed, perplex him with their multiplicity. At the corners of the streets are wickets which can be readily closed, and are well calculated to separate the rabble, or confine a thief. These are shut at night, and guarded by watchmen."

The motley crowd which throngs these narrow streets at the busy hour of day is exceedingly great. Almost every street is a sort of market; dealers in fish, fruit, vegetables, and every kind of provisions, mechanics, quacks, barbers, and oftentimes jugglers, story-tellers, and gamblers, with their attendants,—moving and stationary,—all crowd these thoroughfares, and contrive very nearly to render them "no thoroughfares." Eatables are exposed in the streets, and carried about them, in great numbers, and of all descriptions. There are dogs, cats, rats, living and dead; with fowls, ducks, and other kinds of poultry, as well as living eels, carp, &c., in buckets of water: these last are fed and fattened, and taken out for sale, when considered in a sufficiently prime state; the fresh-water fish are very insipid in taste. As an article of food, dogs and cats are

nighly esteemed by the Chinese. "As the articles exposed for sale in the streets are chiefly adapted to the necessities of the day, the extremes to which the principle of accommodation is carried, furnish a criterion of the pecuniary circumstances of the mass of the people. Poultry and fish are dissected into very minute portions. A quarter of a fowl, the head and neck, and frequently the entrails alone, are all to which their means extend. This, of course, is the luxury, and designed merely to give a relish to their ordinary and less-extravagant fare. Vegetables, from their cheapness, are so indispensable to the daily support of the community, that they are exposed to sale in the streets in the greatest profusion."

The stomach of an European would sicken at many things which are esteemed delicacies among the Chinese. They have no objection, it seems, to eat the flesh of animals that have died: "they won't scruple," says the author of *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 &c.*, "exchanging a live hog for a dead one, if the latter is a little larger; for they like them as well when they die of a distemper, as when killed by a butcher. For this purpose, they will sometimes give such hogs as we purchase, a dose to kill them as soon as they are brought aboard; and when we are obliged to throw them away, they will take them up, and sell them over again to their people. An instance of this happened to us. We had a cow aboard, which we had brought from Batavia, that had calved in our passage; but we soon found that one of the Chinese Custom-house officers had found means to give them something that had killed them both. When we threw them overboard, we saw the fellow whom we had suspected to have poisoned them, with his accomplices, take them up into their boat." A similar circumstance is recorded in the history of Lord Anson's voyage.

The barbers are an important class of persons in the streets of Canton. It is a common thing to see a red lacquered stand, over which at times a large umbrella is placed, where the lower orders assemble to undergo the necessary operation of shaving. "Here they may also have their hair dressed, trimmed, and plaited, their eyes and ears cleaned, their bodies shampooed, and even their toe nails duly attended to." Strangers may be waited upon at their lodgings, when they require the services of these barbers, of whom there are said to be seven thousand in the city of Canton. Quack doctors have also stands in the streets, where they exhibit a variety of plasters, herbs, and puffing paragraphs.

In these crowded streets there are, of course, no carts or carriages; indeed, it is difficult to conceive how there could be any. But their absence is amply compensated by the nimble sedan-bearers, and the sturdy vociferating porters who carry every description of merchandise upon their shoulders. The latter class of men carry their burdens suspended from the ends or the centre of bamboo rods; and they will convey a bulky and ponderous load to any distance with much despatch. "Such is the number of these labourers, that their voices are constantly ringing in your ears; and such is the throng which opposes them, that their progress depends as much on their lungs as their muscles. One class, called by the Chinese 'horses without tails,' addresses you in a more authoritative tone. These are the bearers of men of distinction and wealth, who generally appear abroad in sedan chairs, and often take up so much of the small streets with their vehicles, as to leave but a dangerous space between them and the houses."

Mr. Abeel says, that the appearance of the Chinese at Canton, differed in some respects from his preconceived notions. The most striking peculiarities to the stranger, he tells us, are the great variety of complexion, the general flatness of face, and uniformity of features, and especially the strange formation of the eye, not only with the internal angle curved, but with the lid in many cases so small, as to appear not adapted to its natural functions. "This last peculiarity is most remarkable among children. The lid appears unnaturally distended when the eye is open; at the same time it covers so much of the ball of the eye, as to produce the impression that the latter is uncomfortably confined. With the exception of the occiput, the heads of the men are shaved; while in that region, if its luxuriance will admit, it is permitted to grow until it comes in contact with their heels. In this province it is worn in a pendant plait,—the cords with which it is woven frequently supplying the deficiency of its length. It is quite a comment on fashion—'old custom,' as the Chinese term it,—to asso-

ciate with the popularity and prevalence of the one here described, the recency of its date, and the reproach of its origin. Upon the Tartar conquest, not two centuries ago, the Chinese were compelled to adopt this style of wearing their hair as a mark of subjugation. Many considered it such a disgrace that they preferred losing their heads to their hair. Now it has become an ornament and a mark of proud distinction.

"The girls wear the long plait according to the fashion of the men, but do not shave the other parts of the head. After marriage, the hair is braided upon the head, and decked with a profusion of flowers and jewels answering to the rank or means of the possessor. The ordinary style of dress differs but little in both sexes. It consists of loose pantaloon, and an over-garment or robe with long dangling sleeves, and which varies in length from the knee to the ground. Their girdles, like those of the Jews, frequently answer the purpose of purses. The stocking has no reference to the shape or size of the limb, and the shoe has a thick clumsy sole turning up in front, and destitute of elasticity to aid the step."

#### BEGGARS.

A NUMEROUS class in the population of Canton, and by no means an unimportant one, is that of the beggars, who are a source of great annoyance to the passengers, in the crowded streets, and who moreover make their way into all the shops, and create a terrible noise by discordant singing, accompanied by the clacking sounds produced from striking two pieces of bamboo together, by way of keeping time. It seems that they are privileged by custom to enter the shops, and make this uproar, until the owner discharges them by giving them alms. Some of these wretched mendicants are objects disgusting to the sight from disease and deformity.

"The fraternity of beggars," says Mr. Abeel, "are objects of true compassion, and made themselves objects of notice in Canton. This class is very numerous, and whether an indispensable requisite to office, or a necessary argument to the sympathies of a Chinaman, there are very few exceptions to universal and total blindness." When alone, each one feels his way with a stick; but frequently a number string themselves in a row, and depend upon the sagacity of a blind leader, or the more favoured eyes of a youthful guide. The success of their application is closely connected with the skilful use of bamboo sticks, iron pans, musical instruments, and their own vocal powers; and such is the force of custom, that when they enter a house they are never expelled until their object is gained. It is policy not to be too hasty in answering their request, otherwise the same grating application is likely to be forthwith repeated by an instinctive successor, who never interrupts music, nor suffers a long pause. Groups of them frequently unite, and set up a concert of all their instruments in one place. As you walk through the streets some days, there is scarcely a shop from which these sounds do not proceed. One company sallies forth at twilight, and goes the rounds of some of the principal streets, contiguous to the factories, including the walk in front of the foreign buildings. Their application is usually chanted in mournful strains, and the whole region is made vocal with their numerous and dissonant voices. A Chinaman is stationed before the factories, styled 'king of the beggars,' who preserves order among them in his dominions."

There is said to be an organized association of beggars in Canton, consisting of about one thousand members, and bearing the title of "the Heavenly Flower Society;" these pay a fee of admittance, bind themselves to certain rules, and when disobedient, incur a severe penalty. The government recognises a head man among them, who is made accountable for the conduct of the whole community. But it appears that below the beggars in the scale of human degradation, there are some "most loathsome and miserable" objects. "With matted hair, bodies partially incrustated with dirt, and covered with vermin, and but a

\* "In the streets of Canton, we often meet with blind beggars of both sexes,—a disease which some imagine is the consequence of their living so much on rice; but I rather think it may be occasioned by the hot winds that blow at certain seasons.... They are sure to plague and follow the Europeans, because from one of them they will get more at one time than from a dozen of their countrymen.... If you are not on your guard, they will even run against you with their dirty hands and diseased bodies, to avoid which I have often been obliged to run into shops." *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 and 1748.*

tattered mat to conceal their nakedness, they wander about, eating the rejected offals of fish and vegetables, and lodging in whatever heap of rubbish they may stumble over when sleepy. Some of them are outcast lepers, who are obliged by law to wear a peculiar hat, and mat around the shoulders, to designate them as objects of infection."

## HOUSES.

THE houses of Canton are not to be compared with those of any European city; they are small and low, seldom exceeding one story in height. The dwellings of the poorest class, who live in the extreme parts of the suburbs, along the banks of the river and its creeks, and in the northern part of the old city, are mere mud hovels, offering one single apartment, low, dark, and dirty. At least one-half of the population of Canton live in houses very little better than these. They are rather more spacious and more cleanly; and they are built of bricks, which are the general material for the walls of houses, and which, being manufactured in the neighbourhood, can be obtained at a moderate price. They stand close upon the street, and have usually but a single entrance, which is closed by a bamboo screen suspended from the top of the opening; the windows are small and rarely supplied with glass, in the place of which, paper, mica, and the interior laminae of oyster-shells are to be seen. In these moderate dwellings there are generally three apartments, one of which is used by the whole household as a common eating-room.

The houses of persons of wealth and consequence are much more spacious; like those in many other cities of the East, they are surrounded by a wall twelve or fourteen feet high, which fronts the street, and completely screens the buildings within. A door in this outer enclosure, whose bare walls renders the prospect along the narrow streets in which they are situated, very cheerless, leads into an open court, within which is a visitors' waiting room furnished with chairs and small tables by their side. Here the guest is met and conducted into the principal hall, a spacious apartment, ornamented with carved work, varnished and gilded, and hung with scrolls covered with writing, or representations of landscapes, flowers, birds, &c. Besides their dwellings in the city, the wealthy have villas close to the city, in which the arts of Chinese luxury are exhausted. Mr. Ellis gives the following account of a visit to the villas of Puan-ke-qua and How-qua, the two chief Hong merchants, both situated opposite to Canton, on the south bank of the river. "The former, to which we first went, was interesting as a specimen of Chinese taste in laying out grounds; the great object is to produce as much variety within a small compass as possible, and to furnish pretexts for excursions or entertainments. Puan-ke-qua was surrounded by his children and grand-children, the latter in such complete full dress of Mandarins, that they could with difficulty waddle under the weight of clothes; a small pavilion was erected at the extremity of the garden overlooking the farm, in which was an inscription calling upon the rich to recollect, and appreciate the agricultural labours of the poor. How-qua's house, though not yet finished, was on a scale of magnificence worthy of his fortune, estimated at two millions. This villa, or rather palace, is divided into suites of apartments, highly and tastefully decorated with gilding and carved work, and placed in situations adapted to the different seasons of the year. Some refreshments of fruits and cakes were put before us here, as at Puan-ke-qua's. How-qua, and his brother, a Mandarin, holding some office, waited upon us themselves. A nephew of How-qua's had lately distinguished himself at the examination for civil honours, and placards (like those of office used by the Mandarins,) announcing his success in the legal forms, were placed round the outer court; two bands attended to salute the ambassador on his entrance and departure. Within the enclosure of the garden stand the ruins of the house occupied by Lord Macartney, separated only by a wall from our present residence; it belonged, I believe, to the father of How-qua. The houses of both Puan-ke-qua and How-qua contained halls of their ancestors, with tablets dedicated to their immediate progenitors; the vessels for sacrifice and other parts of their worship, were similar to those we had before seen, but in somewhat better order, and of better materials."

## FIRES.

In no city are the ravages of fires more extensive and more frequent, than in Canton; and it is said that they are not

always the result of accident. The narrow, close streets are very favourable to the spread of a conflagration; and though the Chinese have adopted the use of European engines, the notion of fatalism which prevails among them, renders them too indifferent to the calamity to employ any strenuous exertions in checking it. "When an accidental fire," says the author of a *Voyage, &c.* in 1747, "happens to any of their buildings, they manage it most wretchedly. Instead of working hard, they fall a praying to their household deities, to interpose in extinguishing it, and when they find that their supplications have had no effect, and that the fire is spreading, which, indeed, it most certainly will do, from the vast quantities of wood they are always obliged to keep in their houses for fuel, then they will fall a reproaching their deities for negligence, and will treat them with great contempt. No less than three fires happened during my stay at Canton, which did much mischief; and had it not been for the assistance given by Europeans, the suburbs had almost been reduced to ashes."

When Lord Anson was at Canton, a great fire broke out in the suburbs, and the account given of the proceedings of the Chinese upon the occasion, illustrates their usual practice. On the first alarm, the commodore repaired to the spot with his officers, and boat's crew, to aid the Chinese. "When he came there, he found that it had begun in a sailor's shade, and that, by the slightness of the buildings, and the awkwardness of the Chinese, it was getting head space. However, he perceived that by pulling down some of the adjacent shades, it might easily be extinguished; and particularly observing that it was then running along a wooden cornice, which blazed fiercely, and would immediately communicate the flame to a great distance, he ordered his people to begin with tearing away the cornice. This was presently attempted, and would have been executed; but in the meantime, he was told that as there was no mandarin there, who alone has a power to direct on these occasions, the Chinese would make him, the commodore, answerable for whatever should be pulled down by his command. Hereupon, Mr. Anson and his attendants desisted; and he sent them to the English factory to assist in securing the Company's treasures and effects, as it was easy to foresee that no distance was a protection against the rage of such a fire, where so little was done to put a stop to it; since all the while the Chinese contented themselves with viewing it, and now and then holding one of their idols near it, which they seemed to expect should check its progress. Indeed, at last, a mandarin came out of the city, attended by four or five hundred firemen; these made some feeble efforts to pull down the neighbouring houses; but, by that time the fire had greatly extended itself, and was got amongst the merchants' warehouses; and the Chinese firemen, wanting both skill and spirit, were incapable of checking its violence, so that its fury increased upon them, and it was feared the whole city would be destroyed.

"In this general confusion the viceroy himself came thither, and the commodore was sent to, and was entreated to afford his assistance, being told he might take any measures he should think most prudent in the present emergency. Upon this message, he went thither a second time, carrying with him about forty of his people, who, in the sight of the whole city, exerted themselves after so extraordinary a manner, as in that country was altogether without example. For, behaving with the agility and boldness peculiar to sailors, they were rather animated than deterred by the flames and falling buildings amongst which they wrought; whence it was not uncommon to see the most forward of them tumble to the ground on the roofs, and amidst the ruin of houses, which their own efforts brought down under them. By their resolution and activity the fire was soon extinguished, to the amazement of the Chinese; and it fortunately happened too, that the buildings, being all on one floor, and the materials slight, the seamen, notwithstanding their daring behaviour, escaped with no other injuries than some considerable bruises. The fire, though at last luckily extinguished, did great mischief during the time it continued, for it consumed an hundred shops, and eleven streets full of warehouses, so that the damage amounted to an immense sum; and one of the Chinese merchants, well known to the English, whose name was Suceoy, was supposed for his own share, to have lost near two hundred thousand pounds sterling. It raged, indeed, with unusual violence: for in many of the warehouses there were large quantities of camphire, which greatly added to its fury, and produced a column of ex-



ceeding white flame, which blazed up into the air to such a prodigious height, that it was seen distinctly on board the Centurion, though she was at least thirty miles distant. Whilst the commodore and his people were labouring at the fire, and the terror of its becoming general still possessed the whole city, several of the most considerable Chinese merchants came to Mr. Anson, to desire that he would let each of them have one of the soldiers, (for such they styled his boat's crew from the uniformity of their dress,) to guard their warehouses and dwelling-houses, which, from the known dishonesty of the populace, they feared would be plundered in the tumult. Mr. Anson granted them this request, and all the men that he thus furnished behaved much to the satisfaction of the merchants, who afterwards highly applauded their great diligence and fidelity." The service which the commodore rendered on this occasion, was of great assistance to him in procuring him his long-denied audience of the viceroy, and the necessary license for shipping his provisions and stores. Many of the principal inhabitants waited on him to thank him for his aid, frankly owning to him that he had preserved their city from being totally consumed, as they could never have extinguished the fire themselves.

The conflagration of 1822 is the most remarkable that has occurred for some time, it having destroyed nearly all the European factories, and well nigh gone, indeed, to the destruction of the whole city. It began to the northward of the European factories. "The streets being very narrow," says the Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff, "it gained ground rapidly upon the wooden houses: Instead of extinguishing the flames, the natives were only intent upon their own safety and that of their property, whilst escorted by men with drawn swords and knives. The British chief (President of the Select Committee of Supracargoes,) sent a memorial to the Mandarins, requesting them to pull down the adjoining houses, in order to stop the ravages of the spreading flame. But this request was not complied with, because it was not sealed with the seal of office. Soon afterwards the European factories caught fire, and were almost all burnt down. The loss of the East India Company was very great. Many lives were lost, robbers paraded the streets in search of prey, the confusion was general. Several incendiaries were decapitated by orders of government. Between seventy and ninety streets were laid in ashes, and between 13,000 and 14,000 houses utterly burnt down. The treasures of most of the factories were attacked by the Chinese during the second night of the fire, but the robbers were not successful in finding much cash. The local magistrates were dismissed from their office on account of mismanagement. The governor himself was horror-struck, and is said to have disrobed himself, put off his official cap and boots, and thrown himself into the flames."

The constant experience of these dreadful calamities seems to have had no effect towards inducing the Chinese to become more prompt in endeavouring to check them. Two years ago a fire took place which again threatened the city with destruction. It broke out in the city on the evening of November the 22nd, 1835, and continued to burn with extraordinary fierceness till the following morning at seven, when its further progress appears to have been arrested by the city wall. As the foreign factories lay directly to the leeward, great apprehensions were entertained that the scenes of 1822 would be repeated; all the foreigners packed up their papers and other valuables, ready to put into boats, when all hope of saving the factories should cease; many embarked everything during the night, and were not for some time sufficiently certain of the fire being subdued to re-land their effects. The hong of the hong merchants were also in considerable danger, and the property contained in them being to an exceeding large amount, they early despatched everything across the river for security. Had the fire got past the city wall, the whole of that part of the town where the European dwellings are situated, would have been in flames in an hour, and it was only the want of wind that saved them. The destruction of property was enormous; the fire appeared to be a mile in breadth, and in the most populous part of the city. It was completely confined to the city, and did not reach into the suburbs.

## SHOPS.

In the busy parts of the suburbs of Canton, every house is a shop. The fronts are open to the street, except in the few instances in which the shops are devoted to European

trade. There are two streets, *China Street* and *New China Street*, which are especially the resort of foreigners, and here the productions of almost every part of the globe are to be found. One of the shopkeepers is always to be found sitting on the counter, writing with a camels'-hair brush, or calculating with his swan-pan, on which instrument a Chinese will perform operations in numbers with as much celerity, as the most expert European arithmetician.

The swan-pan is an instrument similar to the abacus of the ancients. It consists of an oblong frame of wood, divided into unequal compartments by a bar running across it, in the direction of its length, at about one-third of the distance from the top to the bottom. Through this bar are inserted, at right angles, a number of parallel wires; and in each wire in the lower compartment are five moveable balls, and in the upper two. "These wires may be considered as the ascending or descending powers of a numeration table, proceeding in a decimal proportion; so that if a ball in any of the wires in the larger compartment be placed against the middle part, and called unit, or one, a ball on the next wire above it will be called ten, and one on the next, one hundred. So, also, a ball on the next wire below that representing units will be one-tenth, next lower one-hundredth; and the ball on the corresponding wires in the smaller compartment will, in the same manner represent five, fifty, five hundred, five-tenths, five-hundredths, &c., the value or power of each of these in the smaller division being always five times as much as those in the larger. It is wonderful the facility with which they will calculate by this process, and what is more remarkable they are scarcely ever known to be wrong even in the most complicated accounts."

This part of Canton being much frequented by the seamen, every artifice is used by the Chinese retailers to attract their attention. Each of them having an English name for himself printed on the outside of his shop, besides a number of advertisements composed for them by the sailors in their own peculiar idiom. The latter, it may be supposed, are often duped by their Chinese friends, who have in general picked up a few sea-phrases by which the seamen are induced to enter their shops; but they suit each other extremely well; as the Chinese dealers possess an imperturbable command of temper, laugh heartily at the jokes of the seamen without understanding them, and humour them in all their sallies. The tradesmen and merchants of Canton speak a dialect of broken English, "in which the idiom of the Chinese language," says Mr. Ellis, "is preserved, combined with the peculiarities of Chinese pronunciation."

The goods exposed for sale in China Street are all adapted to the European market. A profusion of fancy articles, more particularly in ivory, tortoiseshell, and lacquered ware, display themselves temptingly to the foreign visitor, and "soon cause him to return from Canton very deficient in the dollars which he had brought." The characteristic paintings of the Chinese are also to be seen here; their fidelity in copying is almost proverbial. In tailoring, according to an American writer, they are equally exact; for he relates a story of one of the middies of the U. S. frigate *Potomac*, who having ordered a dozen pairs of pantaloons, and sent an old pair as a pattern, received the new ones all laughably true to the original, even to the insertion of a particular patch, and the omission of a particular button. The shops at Canton are always shut about sunset; the owners then retire from business, not, however, to enjoy repose, but to waste their time and substance in gambling, smoking, &c. "They even gamble for what fruit and sweetmeats they desire to have from the stalls in the streets."

Besides the streets which we have mentioned, there are also other places much frequented by European visitors, and appropriated to the sale of articles, the nature of which is generally indicated by the name of the place. *Curiosity Street*, (as the English call it,) is devoted to the sale of antiques, genuine and fictitious; and *Apothecary Street* is full of druggists' shops, the drawers in which are neatly arranged and lettered, but filled principally with simples. "Carpenter Square" is confined for the most part to upholsterers, trunk-makers, &c.; there are sold the "Camphor-wood" trunks, of which the majority, however, are said to be made of common wood, rubbed over with camphorated oil.

It is customary with the tradesmen to suspend before their shops a large ornamental tablet of wood, varnished and gilded, and inscribed with their names and the goods in which they trade, with such additional particulars as

they may think conducive to their interests. Mr. Bennett mentions a shop in China Street, in front of which was a lacquered board, upon which, in golden letters, was the following attractive announcement:—"The Sailors' Coffee Shop, Chan Lung, No. 10, New-China Street, where all kinds of silks and teas are sold, and goods of every description for seamen. Sailors! you are invited to try this shop, where you will find honest dealing, and where you can have ready-made coffee and tea but no samshoo." The rooms for this purpose were very neat, "with small couches for honest and sober Jack to recline upon, some pamphlets and tracts to amuse his mind, as he sipped the decoction of the Indian berry; the shop contained straw hats, various portraits, and coarse articles of Chinese manufacture, tempting him to purchase for his friends and acquaintances at home; and the owner appeared to be an intelligent man."

Eating shops are very numerous in the suburbs of Canton; they contain an immense number of made dishes, and are "decorated also with enormous fat pigs, varnished over, and pendent from different parts of the shop, together with varnished ducks and geese;" the latter birds are also dried and pressed, and then have a curious appearance. There is a small market at the bottom of China Street, or Old-China Street as it is sometimes called, where vegetables and fruit are exposed, and where, to the astonishment of the European visitor, there is a constant supply of dogs and cats intended for sale as provisions. They are brought in baskets alive, and sold by weight. "The dogs," says Mr. Holman, "are generally young puppies, but the cats are of various ages. Rats and frogs are also commonly sold for eating, and even dead rats thrown overboard from the ships at Whampoa, are picked up by the natives and cooked."

There are no commercial measures in China, all dry goods and liquids being sold by weight. "Everything living or dead, organic or inorganic, is sold by weight in this celestial country; whether it be fruit or ballast-stones, oil or vegetables, living dogs or pigs, cats or poultry, they are all purchased by the catty. A Chinese does not seem to have any idea of measurement, for one was asked whether we should have much wind,—Yes, plenty catties\* of wind, by, by, come; and when some gentlemen were taking observations of the sun, the Chinese observed upon them that 'they were weighing the sun.'"

"In buying any article, however small or trifling, at Canton," says Mr. Reynolds, "the seller will furnish you with a small paper, containing some Chinese characters, which are called *chops*. If called on by the custom-house officer, or mandarin, to pay duty on these articles, you simply present them with the chops, and it is their business to find the merchant who sold the article, and collect the revenue from him."

The customs of the Chinese are proverbially unchangeable; yet, unless they have changed since the days of Lord Anson, some of these dealers must be very great rogues. "The method of buying provisions in China," says the historian of the voyage, "being by weight, the tricks the Chinese made use of to augment the weight of what they sold to the Centurion, were almost incredible. One time, a large quantity of fowls and ducks being bought for the ship's store, the greatest part of them presently died; this spread a general alarm on board, it being apprehended they had been killed by poison; but, on examination, it appeared that it was only owing to their being crammed with stones and gravel to increase their weight, the quantity thus forced into most of the ducks, being found to amount to ten ounces each. The hogs, too, which were bought ready killed of the Chinese butchers, had water injected into them for the same purpose; so that a carcase hung up all night that the water might drain from it, had lost above a stone of its weight." The author of a *Voyage &c.*, in 1747, mentions the same practice; but it is hardly one which could be resorted to with success at the present day.

"Taking rambles over the narrow streets of the suburbs of Canton," says Mr. Bennett, "filled with elegant shops, strictly Chinese, with the various gilded signs, I witnessed a very novel and agreeable sight to a stranger; everything assumed a different appearance to that seen in any other country; the narrow and crowded streets hardly afford a

passage for two persons abreast, and the constant passing and repassing of porters with their burdens, bawling out to clear the way, is annoying to passengers. The shops are fitted up in an elegant style, and are in many of the streets exceedingly spacious; the shoemakers' shops are filled with shoes, from those of the small-footed women, decorated in a most tasteful and fanciful manner, to the larger ones of the long-footed race. The shops of tailors, sign-painters, apothecaries, book and paper sellers, glass-blowers, &c., are numerous, and eating shops, filled with all kinds of birds and beasts, cooked in their peculiar manner, and afterwards varnished, and poulterers' shops with living and dead poultry of all descriptions, were in some of the streets very abundant."

One of the most highly-prized delicacies which the stranger will observe exposed for sale in the markets of Canton, is a large grub-worm preserved in sugar and dried. "Not the first salmon brought in the spring to the Boston market," says an American writer, "nor the first plate of strawberries, nay, not even the luscious and savoury canvass-back duck of the Potomac, can be more highly prized than those sweetened grub-worms, which, owing to their cost, can only find a place on the table of the wealthy. There are no people in the world who appear to have acquired more singular tastes in exotics for the table, than the Chinese. The edible birds' nests from Java and other islands are in great demand, and find a place on their tables, at least on feast days. This luxury forms no inconsiderable article of trade. Sharks' fins, another article highly prized, may be found on their table, on all great occasions. There is scarcely any exotic, however, of which they are more fond than *bêche de mer*, a gelatinous substance, procured from the rocks of the islands in the East Indies, and of late years found, we believe, in considerable quantities, among some of the islands of the Pacific. Many of our small vessels have found a good business in procuring and carrying this article to Canton."

#### RELIGION, ETC.

"Among the objects most calculated," says Mr. Abeelf, "to attract the attention and arouse the sympathies of the Christian, are the indices of their moral debasement. Their temples are numerous, their gods without number. One idol, and frequently more, is seated in state in every temple, while others, of a probably inferior dignity and office, are standing near. Some of them are frightful-looking figures; all are gross in form, answering to their notions of bodily elegance, or rather of bodily comfort, which appears to a Chinaman of higher importance. The structure of the temple, as well as the number and arrangement of the images, depends upon the tenets of the sect to which they belong."

The three acknowledged sects or religions of China, are those of *Joo*, *Shih* or *Fo*, and *Taou*, being the followers respectively of Confucius, of Buddha, and of Laou-tsze. The Confucian is the state religion, the emperor and his officers performing the functions of a hierarchy and priesthood. The emperor is considered the head of the state religion, and, as high-priest, can alone, with his immediate representatives, sacrifice in the government temples. The two separate orders of *Fo* and *Taou* are only tolerated, not maintained by the government; and they derive their support entirely from their own friends, or from the voluntary contributions of private individuals. The people at Canton are said to be very indifferent to the ceremonies, though, as a matter of habit, they practise them in general with regularity. Mr. Reynolds, after describing the performance of worship in the great temple, on the side of the river opposite to Canton, says, "While our little party were standing at the porch looking on, there were a number of Chinese near, who were laughing, talking, smoking, and apparently ridiculing the ceremonies; this, however, we could not positively ascertain. The most of the images worshipped are said to be of evil spirits, and for which they give this single reason—that the good spirits will not injure them, and the evil, or bad ones, by this attention and devotion may be prevented from doing so; certainly, for such a people, such a reason is not a bad one. Religion! it does not deserve the name, as there is not a virtue held sacred among them, nor a vice they do not practise." Mr. Bennett speaks of the indifference of the Chinese in this

\* The principal weights for merchandise at Canton are, the pecul, the catty, and the tale, the pecul being divided into one hundred catties, or one thousand six hundred tales. The catty is equivalent to one pound and one-third avoirdupois.

† A minister of the reformed Dutch church in North America, and missionary to the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in South Eastern Asia.

respect. "The priesthood performed their devotions," he says, "by themselves, for there was not a Chinese present at the worship; indeed, the Chinese seem to have but little regard for religion; they visit the temples early in the morning to make their offerings before the idols, and perform the usual religious ceremonies at sunset, but apparently, more as a custom than from any sincere, religious devotion. I have seen the parents visit the temples at an early hour in the morning, bringing their family to adore the idols with them, each carrying tapers and offerings. The ceremony of prostration, &c., was gone through in so mechanical a manner, as to leave but little, or no doubt, on the mind of the spectator, that it was observed rather as a custom descended to them from their forefathers, than as arising from any sense of religious feelings towards a superior and benevolent Deity."

When Lord Amherst's embassy was at Canton, it was lodged in the great temple in question; and to provide for the accommodation of the party, it was necessary to displace the colossal representations of Fo from the principal hall, and to send them, as it was said, on a visit to their kindred upon the opposite bank; the ceremonies of religion were, however, uninterrupted, and the priests performed their daily circumambulations in another hall, which had not been put in requisition. Mr. Ellis, who thought that parts of the ceremonial did not seem to want solemnity and decorum, and that if the countenances of the priests did not display devout attention, they had "an expression of abstract nihilism, worthy of the speculative absorption of the human into the divine existence, inculcated by Hindoo theology," remarks that the "ready appropriation of so celebrated a place of worship, accompanied as it had been by the dislodgement of so many idols, and such great changes in the distribution of the compartments, was not the least proof of the indifference of the Chinese to religious deencies: it is also worth remarking," he adds, "that during our stay in the temple I never observed any individual but the priests engaged in acts of devotion; the Chinese looked on with less curiosity indeed, but with as much indifference as ourselves."

Besides the numerous temples in the city, small images answering to the Chinese notions of district gods, are placed in the corners of the streets to receive the homage of the neighbourhood. Every house, too, has its family altar, either before the door or in the principal room, frequently in both places. Those in front of the house are generally small alcoves on a projecting platform, furnished with a few idols, or more commonly with the Chinese written character, signifying God, or superior being. "As you walk out in the evening, the fumes of sandal-wood, of which their incense stick is made, accost the sense in every direction, and their light almost answers for city lamps in these narrow streets. These, with a few wax tapers, and one or two unmeaning bows of the person who prepares them, are the daily offerings made to the images of China."

#### THE GREAT TEMPLE OF HONAN.

"The traveller," says Mr. Reynolds, "who does not visit that great monastery belonging to the sect called Fuh (Fo) or Buddah, in Chinese, *Hoe-Chong-sze*, or Honan Jos-house, may be said to have scarcely seen Canton." It is an immense building, situated near the margin of the river on the opposite side to the city, and, together with its grounds, enclosed by a wall. Crossing the river the visiter lands at a dirty causeway, near some timber-yards; the entrance to the temple is not far from the landing-place, and is approached through an assemblage of miserable fruit and eating stalls.

As the visiter enters the gate, his eye is arrested by a few majestic bananas, which appear to have withstood the storms of centuries; passing up a central walk formed by a broad pavement of granite, he is led through two buildings, a short distance apart, in each of which are seated colossal figures, intended as warders to the temple. "Some of these figures," says Mr. Reynolds, "were not less than twenty feet in height, gilt or painted in the most grotesque manner; one was represented playing on a musical instrument; others frowning, with their immense eye-balls projecting from their sockets, while another was holding large balls between the thumb and finger, in a threatening attitude of throwing them." A short distance further are two buildings, directly opposite to each other, to which flagged walks branch off from the main avenue. These contain a number of famous military demigods, one of which has

been adopted as the patron deity of the reigning family of China. Beyond these are three large halls, interrupting the central walk, and containing each of them a variety of idols, of different dimensions and appearance. "In one of them are seated three huge figures, designed to illustrate the triune manifestation of Budh,—the past, present, and future. Eighteen images, the disciples of Budh, are arranged on each side of the hall. 'The Mantchoo Tartar family, on the throne of China,' say its monarchs, 'are their disciples of Budh, appearing again on the stage of the world, according to their ideas of the Metempsychosis.'"

Each of these principal halls contains a number of ornamental pillars. Their roofs are generally made to project with the low and convex sweep of primitive architecture, and decorated with grotesque monsters intended to represent dragons and lions. Besides these principal buildings there are others, situated on each side of the enclosed space, employed as cells for lodging, a dining apartment, idol halls, and other necessary additions. There are also pens for animals, for "no free-will offering to the gods is considered more acceptable than living domestic animals liberally supported until death."

In one of the principal halls which we have mentioned, the daily service is performed, and the assembled priesthood may be seen "worshipping, chanting, striking gongs, arranged in rows, and frequently performing the *ko-tow*, in adoration of their senseless gilded deity." "We saw about seventy," says Mr. Abeol, "engaged in their daily devotions in one of the largest halls. The youngest was perhaps twelve years of age, and the eldest passing three score and ten. They were all dressed in their robes, and spent about an hour in droning their cabalistic words, aided and timed by the beat of metal vessels. During the hour they passed through the different attitudes of kneeling, knocking their heads, standing, bowing, and walking in single file around the hall. The whole spectacle was calculated," adds this writer, "to impress a feeling heart with compassion. It was deeply affecting to see so many, apparently in the last stage of this probationary existence, trusting to a delusion which had impressed its own unwillingness upon their countenances, while the younger ones were early imbibing the same stupefying lesson."

"As soon as the mummery had ceased," says Mr. Bennett, "the priests all flocked out of the temple, adjourned to their respective rooms, divested themselves of their official robes, and the senseless figures were left to themselves with some lamps burning before them, and the silence of the temple was a type of that portentous spectre Superstition. Another larger and handsomely-adorned temple was situated beyond this, as well as numerous others of smaller size within the enclosure, all kept in a very neat and clean state."

"Being soon satisfied with the sight of gilded gods and fanatical priests, mingled with all the gaudy paraphernalia of superstition, we adjourned to view the fat pigs, which saluted us by their effluvia some time before we attained their dwelling, where we beheld them luxuriating on a bed of filth, having nothing to do but undergo the laborious occupations of eating, drinking, sleeping, and getting fat; before them were sacred buckets, which had been probably filled with food, but were now empty; they were enormously fat, and seven or eight in number. Some persons informed me that they were kept until they died suffocated with fat, but others said that they formed an annual sacrifice to the gods during the grand festivals. These huge filthy creatures are so gross as to cause the mouths of the Chinese who behold them to water with delight, in anticipation of the splendid dishes their carcasses would afford to gratify their mortal appetites, exciting deep regret that they are to be devoted as ideal feasts only for immortals."

Several small and neat buildings are scattered about the garden, and in one of them are contained the ashes of the priests burned after death. "One," says Mr. Reynolds, "had been burned only the day before, and our officers were permitted to raise the cover of the jar that contained his ashes. There were about sixty urns in the building. At the end of each year these urns were emptied of their contents into a vault beneath the building, and the jars reserved for the same purpose during the coming year. The garden in which these small buildings are arranged has but little to recommend it; there are, however, a number of large and shady trees, whose branches are thronged with birds, which, if not held sacred like the *jos-pigs*, are,



nevertheless, secure from molestation or being put to death. Add to these a duck-pond, a few flowers and vegetables, and you have a picture of the garden. The trees are mostly willows, whose branches hung down to the ground."

A fire took place in one of the apartments of this temple in 1834, and the damage has probably been repaired by this time.

#### CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

THE profligacy and corruption of the people of Canton generally is spoken of by many writers. They are, perhaps, the worst specimen of the nation that could be presented to us, as they are also the only one with which we have been permitted to become closely acquainted; and if we were to judge of the whole nation by this single specimen, our opinion would be unfavourable in the extreme. It is true that our experience of the Chinese character, confined as it is to a single town, and that a trading sea-port, would not justify us in condemning the whole people; but it is quite sufficient to warrant us in condemning the inhabitants of that particular town. The proclamations of the magistrates at Canton to enforce the better observance of public decorum are ceaseless, and no other proof than their frequency is required to point out their inefficiency, while the force of example carries all before it. It is reported of the Foo-yuen, or viceroy, that in a conversation with some magistrates who visited him during an indisposition under which he laboured, he expressed himself in the following terms.

"When first I came to Canton I was ignorant of the manners, customs, and habits of the people, and I fancied that they were the same as in other parts of the empire. I have been an attentive observer of men and things here and elsewhere. The comparison is woefully against Canton: deceit and falsehood prevail everywhere,—in all ranks and in all places. There is no truth in man nor honesty in woman! I have endeavoured in vain to correct these evils,—it has been labour lost. I am sick at heart, and wish to depart from such scenes of vice and habitual falsehood, finding that they are too deep rooted ever to be eradicated. I have implored the emperor to allow me to depart in peace. 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'"

Mr. Holman says that vicious habits are so universal among all ranks, that the magistrate in his edicts is often obliged to call upon fathers and elder brothers, to use their exertions in the suppression of vice in the younger branches of society. These habits are encouraged by the existence of so many receptacles for dissipation, to which young men are ensnared, and from which they cannot tear themselves till their property is squandered, and destitution drives them to the commission of more serious offences. The abuses which the governor of Canton has endeavoured to suppress are numberless; no efforts of his can abolish them until there be introduced the sweeping hand of reform among the magistrates, police, and government agents, who are the origin, or the supporters of every corruption. "An attentive observer may trace a gradual link of despotism through the whole population; the attainment of wealth seems the grand object of all classes", and the means by which it may be procured are considered not with regard to their propriety but their possibility. The violent extortion of illegal fees, and the institution of false accusations for the purpose of extorting money, called in the slang of the public offices, *planting a fir-tree*, are carried on with impunity. Justice is but a shadow; wealth alone is power, for it alone will insure toleration or protection, and yet it is often the means of its possessor falling a prey to the rapacity of the government."

The extent to which gambling is carried in China is well known; laws indeed are enacted for its suppression, but the practice has obtained so firm a footing, and is so thoroughly spread among the people, as to defy all legislative measures. The lower orders in the street commonly convert their petty purchases at the small stalls into mere games of hazard, risking the whole amount of the stake for the chance of increasing the quantity of the article which they desire to obtain. It is not, however, to them that the vice is confined; the keepers of gaming-houses in Canton are frequently individuals of rank and property, who enter into schemes for entrapping the unwary, and in-

veigling young men of property into a passion for play. The penal liabilities are the confiscation of all the property found in a gaming-house, as well as the house itself, and the punishment of eighty blows to be inflicted on all who play for either money or goods,—the playing for food or liquors not, however, being considered an offence.

The frequent recurrence of suicide in Canton has been remarked as a proof and a consequence of the general demoralization. It is calculated that eight or nine-tenths of the untimely deaths which come under the notice of the authorities, are caused by suicide, and that of these, three-fourths are perpetrated by women. A short time ago, a proclamation was put forth by the celebrated judge Yaou, "prohibiting the wicked and foolish custom of terminating one's own existence." The arguments which he used are, however, drawn only from the laws of the empire, and the social relations of the people; they have no reference to a future responsibility. "He does not extend his reasoning to the fear of incurring the Divine wrath, by sinfully resigning that life which is the gift, and at the disposal, of heaven; the importance of which consideration is alike unthought of by himself, and those whose crime his remarks are intended to deprecate. Without the enforcement of religious persuasion, he is not likely to decrease the number of the offenders who, by commission of the act against which he exclaims, abandon all earthly ties; and in the blindness of their last crime, fling themselves into the presence of the offended Deity."

#### POLICE.

"THE police of Canton cannot but strike the attention of every one, as it is unquestionably among the best regulated in the world. Spies are distributed in every part, and watch the actions of every one, particularly the foreign residents. In every square, at every hour of the night, may be heard the watchmen, with their heavy bamboo clubs, striking the pavement. The streets are very narrow, and the houses being lofty in many parts, make them appear like narrow lanes, some exceedingly filthy, even to offensiveness, while others are kept in better order. At every square there is a gate, which is closed every night at ten o'clock, and guarded by a watchman; and every individual foreigner passing after this hour must carry with him a lighted lantern, with his name in legible characters painted on it. Should any alarm be given, these gates are instantly secured, enclosing all offenders, so that any one guilty of breaking the peace, or any crime whatever, may easily be taken; indeed, escape is utterly impossible."

Such is the description given by an American writer, of the police of Canton in the suburbs; as to what it is within the wall, we have no positive knowledge, though every reason to believe it to be just the same as without them. It is very true that the arrangements here mentioned may be well adapted to the object had in view; but it is equally true that the very best arrangements, if there be not trusty functionaries to carry them into execution, will hardly produce a better effect than the very worst. Now the venality and rapacity of public officers in China, from the governor of a province to the lowest "runner of police," are nearly proverbial. All seem to regard the trust placed in their hands, only as a means of enriching themselves at the expense of their fellow subjects who are not fortunate enough to be blessed with the same opportunities. The police of Canton are said to be in the habit of arresting rich individuals under false accusations, and confining them in private houses, or in the hold of a boat, where they are subjected to torture and ill-treatment of various kinds, to induce them to pay for their liberation. "The constancy with which these illegal acts are repeated, arises, no doubt, from the popular conviction of the inutility of appealing to the authorities above them." It is said, too, that in extorting illegal fees, the agents of the government will give themselves slight cuts upon the head or elsewhere, and then threaten to charge their victims with having wounded His Imperial Majesty's officers; this is a capital offence, and in order to escape from being accused of it, the unfortunate beings will submit to a large extortion.

The combination between the thieves and the police is said to be notorious. These officers of justice either participate in the proceeds of a robbery, or seize the offenders, and let them loose for a certain sum. "When the frequency of crime renders the arrest of offenders absolutely unavoidable, the police for the sake of appearances bring before the magistrates old delinquents who had nothing to

\* Speaking of the gods of this people, the American missionary says, "as might be expected, the god of wealth is the most popular deity among the tradesmen and merchants; he is represented with a wedge of gold in one hand."

do with the robbery in question, while they permit the actual offenders to go about undisturbed. The inability of the magistrates to put down the associations of thieves is such, that it is a part of their policy to wink at those doings over which they have little or no control. The inhabitants are consequently obliged to form counter-associations for their mutual protection, contributing thereto both in money and in personal services, when called upon. Among the annoyances of which they complain, are the disturbances caused by fellows who either are, or pretend to be drunk, and the importunities of sturdy beggars who make a practice of extorting charity by threats and intimidation." The following specimen of the advertisements, which it is customary to stick (in manuscript) against the walls of the streets, for the recovery of lost property, will be amusing.

"Chang-Chau-Lai, who issues this thanksgiving advertisement, lives outside the south gate in Little Tranquillity Lane, where he has opened an incense smoking musquito shop. On the evening of the 12th instant, two of his fellow-workmen in the shop, Ne-a-hung and Atik, employed a stupefying drug, which by its fumes, sunk all the partners in a deep sleep, during which, they robbed the shop of all the money, clothes, &c., which they could carry away. Next morning, when the partners awoke, no trace was to be found of these men. If any good people know where they are, and will give information, a thank-offering in flowery red paper of four dollars will be presented. If both the booty and the men be seized, and delivered over at my little shop, dollars will be presented. Decidedly I will not eat my words. This advertisement is true.

"Ne-a-hung is about twenty years of age, short stature, has a white face, and no beard. Atik, whose surname is not remembered, is upwards of twenty years of age, is tall, has a sallow face, and no beard. Reign of Taou-kiang, ninth year, ninth moon, third day."

The practice of kidnapping children is said to be very common in Canton. There is a prohibiting edict on the subject, (one of the many annually issued as a matter of form,) in which the kidnappers are denounced with severity. "Such wicked wretches as these, who distress our streets, and torment our children, are most deserving of intense

hatred. I, the magistrate, on examining cases of appeal about children who have not yet been restored, have found a clue which I shall hasten to unfold by secret means, in order to remove this calamity from the people. Besides employing these efforts, I hereby issue a severe interdict against all such practices, and solemnly enjoin all soldiers and people to obey implicitly the laws, and to use their efforts to be good. Be sedulously careful not to kidnap children, and thereby commit a great crime. I have already seized the kidnappers Luh-a-kae, Choo-te-han, Leaching, Taou-a-kew, and others; all of whom have been thrown into prison, and, according to law, sentenced to be strangled. You ought to consider them a mirror, showing whither your former course leads. Do not for the sake of petty gains use your bodies to make experiments on the law. Let every one yield implicit obedience hereto. Offend not."

The engraving in page 169 gives a view of a street in the suburbs of Canton; our readers will observe various objects in it which we have described. In the engraving below, they will observe one of those ambulatory barbers who abound in the streets of Canton, engaged in operating upon a customer. "The barber carries about his moveable shop, and cheerfully traverses the streets in search of employment. When he encounters a person willing to accept his services, he dextrously removes the bamboo pole to which his load is attached from the shoulder, and begins the elaborate process. The utensil on his left hand, resembling a tripod, supplies the fire and water so essentially necessary to the tonsorial operations: the chest on his right hand contains the apparatus for shaving the head and beard, cleansing the ears, cutting the nails of the toes and fingers, and is easily converted into a seat for the welcome customer."

"In times of scarcity," says Mr. Holman, "the poor are sometimes reduced to the distressing alternative of either selling their children, or seeing them perish for want. On these occasions, many parents go about Canton, leading their own children through the streets, offering them for sale. In such cases, the purchaser is required to give a written promise that he will provide for the child, treat it well, &c. One instance is mentioned of a little girl, six years of age, being sold for twenty-five dollars."



STREET SCENE IN CANTON.